Lebanon MS1
Syria MS1

Chapter VI

SYRIA AND LEBANON

LAND AND POPULATION

§ 241. At first sight, the main crop of Syria appears to be thistles, and so it is in fact: about half the land is under fallow every year, and the cultivated land is cropped only one year in two or even three. There are some districts with intensive cultivation, for instance, the oasis of Damascus, with its brilliant green groups irrigated by 'Abana and Pharphar'; but most of Syria is cultivated very extensively indeed.

§ 242. In Syria and Lebanon together the area cultivated before the last war was some 7·8 million acres, but of this total only 3,900,000 acres were cropped each year, the remainder being fallow. The greater part of the cropped area was under cereals, almost two-thirds being under wheat and one-third under barley.

§ 243. In Lebanon, the whole of the cultivated area is cropped, and there is no uncultivated land which could be brought into cultivation. In Syria however there are large areas of cultivable land which are not at present cultivated, the total cultivable area being some 103 million acres, of which only about one-third is under cultivation. Unfortunately this figure is only a rough estimate, and it is not clear how much of the area is cultivable under present conditions, or how much of it is marginal desert grazing. Some of it is undoubtedly cultivable under present conditions, and there is certainly no shortage of land in Syria.

SYRIA: AGRICULTURAL LAND, 1938*

Province	Cultivable	Cultivated (including fallow)
	Area	Area
Aleppo	4,271,000	1,153,800
Euphrates	3,213,000	321,300
Idlib	3,745,000	1,086,000
Hama	986,000	592,000
Homs	1,379,000	1,111,000
Damascus	1,086,000	592,000
Hauran	2,145,000	2,145,000
Total	19,825,000	6,965,000

* Omitting the provinces of Latakia and Jebel ed Druse for which no figures are available; their cultivated area may be estimated at about half a million acres.

SYRIA AND LEBANON: AGRICULTURAL AREAS

GRAIN PRODUCTION IN SYRIA AND LEBANON, 1936-43

	Wheat			Barley		
	Area	Tons	Cwts per acre	Area	Tons	Cwts per acre
1936						
1937						
1938						
1939						
1940						
1941						
1942						
1943						

With a total rural population of about 2·8 million in 1942–3, the production of grain per head amounts to only 3·4 quintals or 6·4 hundredweights. Thus the problem for Syria is to in-